

melting point (how long before we burn?)

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melting point (how long before we burn?)

by Anonymous

Summary

“Okay,” he concedes gently, running his thumb over the freckles scattered across Dream’s face. “I’ll stay.”

Dream’s response is a soft, tired hum, and then his eyes are slipping shut again. George allows himself a soft smile, listening to his quiet breaths. His chest feels fuzzy, warm, adoration threatening to strangle him as he stares upon the sight.

After a moment, he draws his hand away, pulling it back to his side. Dream mumbles groggily, reaches out, and then their hands are pressing warm together as their fingers interlace.

He doesn’t move from his spot, even as his phone buzzes with texts from Sapnap and inquiries from Karl about why he hasn’t come to class. Instead he sits with Dream, and listens to his gentle, steady breaths, all while drowning in the warm affection that’s filling his lungs.

So the fire grows, slowly; steadily, and George does nothing but burn.

5 times in which Dream kisses George (and misses), and 1 time that George kisses Dream (and hits).

Notes

A gift for the lovely [@Red Devisions](#) on Twitter because I said I would write a fic for her and so I did. I love you Red you are so lovely and awesome and skilled; so this is for you!!!

Also I love College AUs, so here you go. Red also makes really beautiful art -- both dnf and not -- so you should totally check it out right [here](#)! And drop a follow as well. :]

Songs I looped:

[Haunted - Taylor Swift](#)

[Back To December - Taylor Swift](#)

[If This Was A Movie - Taylor Swift](#)

Yes, I am in my Swiftie era right now. So what.

Enjoy!! <3

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

i.

It's 1:37 am.

1:37 am, and George is slaving away at his laptop, legs crossed underneath him and exhaustion seeping so deep into him that he can feel it in his bones. He blinks slowly, rubs at his eyes like it would wipe away the tiredness tugging at his core. The text written in size twelve Times New Roman font stares mockingly back at him.

One more paragraph. One more paragraph and he'll meet the minimum word count — surpass it maybe by a hundred words or so, then he can quickly skim through it before turning it in, and finally, *finally* get some sleep. How long has it been since he started working on this god-forsaken essay? Years, probably.

He shifts in his seat, typing noises filling the air as his fingers press rapidly against each key, groans and backspaces once or twice. It's quiet and dark in the kitchen, the only light sources being his laptop and the clock on the microwave, which now reads *1:40 am* in big red numbers. By far, not the best night he's ever had, but he supposes that it's to be expected. Sacrificing hours of sleep *is* what he agreed to when he decided to enroll in college; *American* college no less.

The sound of the door unlocking is what makes him startle. His hands hover over the keyboard as he pauses, eyebrows furrowing only to hear the familiar jingle of keys, and then the door opens and shuts with a gentle click. A deft finger flicks the kitchen light on, then his roommate is strolling it, looking oddly energetic for someone who's been awake for almost sixteen hours now. George winces, squeezes his eyes shut and rubs at them, then blinks rapidly in an attempt to get used to the sudden change in lighting.

A cup is set in front of him, thudding quietly on the wood of their table. George stares at it for a moment before craning his neck up. He meets honey colored eyes — green, more accurately, but it's honey colored to him and that's really what matters here — glimmering with care, amusement, and just a little bit of soft concern that makes his heart squeeze fondly.

"I got you coffee," Dream explains, nudging it towards him. Steam rises in the air. It's fresh.

George frowns but takes it; the cup is warm under his touch. He cups it in both hands, leaning back in his chair, not caring for the prominent exhaustion in his voice when he speaks. "I didn't even notice you leave."

Distantly, he notes that Dream isn't holding anything else.

Did he go out just to get me something?

Dream laughs quietly. "'Course you didn't," is his only response. He can hear the playful eye roll in his voice, even as Dream turns away to toss his keys on the counter and shrug off his jacket. "You've been zoned out doing your essay all night."

“Can you blame me?” He scoffs, taking a sip of the drink. It’s the exact same coffee that he always orders, and he smiles to himself at the realization. The warm liquid slips down his throat and settles nicely in his belly.

“Not really,” Dream admits, coming back towards the table. He peers over George’s shoulder, eyes skimming over the text. “You look like you’re almost done.”

The close proximity is nothing new to their friendship, but for some reason it makes George shift in his seat, hyper aware of how Dream’s arm comes to rest on the wood of his chair, how he smells like mocha and summer and flowers, how something in him buzzes delightfully at the realization. George hums, fingers tapping on the table absentmindedly, tries to distract himself with thoughts of the essay, thoughts of how heated the cup under his fingers is.

“Almost,” he mumbles, exhales softly. Distracting himself works, to an extent.

“Almost.” Dream repeats, sounding sympathetic. A hand settles on the top of George’s head, ruffling through his hair gently. “I believe in you.”

He smiles tiredly, thinking that such a simple action should not make happiness bloom so strongly in his chest. “Thanks.” A pause, and then he adds on later, “You should go to bed. You have classes in the morning, don’t you?”

“10 o’clock,” Dream affirms with a click of his tongue, the smile in his voice audible. “Sorry for distracting you.”

“Don’t worry about it,” George answers, turning his attention back to his essay. He settles his fingers back on the keys, pushing the coffee to the side, and after a moment he resumes his typing. “Goodnight.”

Something soft presses against the top of his head. Barely even there, really, but enough that George can feel it and tense. And then it’s gone, and Dream’s fingers are ruffling through his hair once more before they retreat along with soft footsteps.

“Goodnight,” Dream says, strangely fond. George doesn’t respond — he *can’t* respond, not really, because his throat is dry and redness is blooming all the way up to the tips of his ears and down to his collarbone.

He glances at the clock on his screen.

It's 1:51 am.

1:51 am, and Dream just kissed George on the top of his head.

1:51 am, and George *liked* it.

ii.

"She should've left the house," Sapnap says, through a mouthful of popcorn. George shoots him a look, and in response he receives nothing but a shrug.

"It's a horror movie," Dream chimes in from his place beside George, rolling his eyes, "everyone is *supposed* to be stupid."

Sapnap scoffs, wiggles his feet from where he had laid them across the couch. Something about getting comfortable, George recalls, though he did think it was annoying seeing as now he has been forced up against Dream's side, so close that he can feel the soft material of his sweatpants brushing up against his bare legs. He's also alarmingly aware of how Dream's arm is resting along the top of the couch, how all George has to do is shift over a little and then tilt his head and he can rest on Dream's shoulder. It's tempting, in a way.

George pulls his legs closer to himself, dips his hand into the popcorn bowl and shoves a few buttery kernels into his mouth.

"It should be common sense." Sapnap says eventually, gaze still locked on the television.

A jumpscare pops up on the screen. George tenses, heart rate spiking, and Dream's thigh knocks

softly against his, as if reassuring. Dream hums. “Nah.”

The movie progresses. George doesn't know why he agreed to watching this — well it's not like he actually did, to be honest, he was more forced into it by Sapnap than anything. Any other movie he would've been fine with, just not something *scary*. George doesn't like scary things, not really, not since he was a sniffly, scrawny pre-teen and he had decided to watch one particular horror movie that.. probably was not meant for sniffly, scrawny pre-teens. He'd ended up having nightmares for weeks after that.

In retrospect, the movie itself hadn't really been *that* scary. He supposes that it had simply been scarier as a child, which makes sense. But, still. George doesn't like scary things.

Another jumpscare pops up. The main character screams, music intensifying. George flinches despite himself, unconsciously adjusts himself on the couch and munches on more popcorn. Maybe if he chews loud enough, he can tune out the movie. He watches idly, mind beginning to wander the longer the film drags on.

He thinks back to his essay, wonders how long it'll take his professor to *finally* grade it. He thinks about how his phone is probably buzzing with texts from Quackity; the younger student always seems to love pestering him at all times. It's not like he minds much, even if he acts like he does, as Quackity is a good friend, funny, and George enjoys his company.

His mind drifts towards Dream, musing fondly over their little interactions over the past couple of days. Ever since that night when George had stayed up to work on his essay, things haven't been quite the same. It's not bad, either. It's just... different in a way that he isn't used to. Dream seems more touchy, more *soft* with him, and mornings usually come with an affectionate, sleepy ruffle of George's bed mussed hair when Dream shuffles by him in the kitchen, or a short flick on the forehead when Dream is awake enough to banter with him. He finds that it's nice, always catches himself grinning stupidly whenever Dream tosses him the same bright, fond smile that never fails to make George feel all lovely and warm inside.

Thinking back on the months spent being Dream's roommate, George thinks that the slight change in their dynamic is a welcome one.

He exhales softly, eyelids fluttering as sleepiness settles into his limbs and weighs him further down into the soft cushions of the couch, dragging himself closer to the still, nice-smelling heat that is settled just a bit to his right. His head settles on something a little firmer than a pillow, the heat pressing against his side as he drowsily shifts closer. The action is automated, and he feels the body under him tense, realizing that it's *Dream* that he's sleepily leaning on. Embarrassment flushes his cheeks red and he's just about to pull away, stammer out an apology and return to his own private space, but, after a moment, the body under him relaxes. A gentle arm wraps carefully

around him, giving him all the time to pull away, and when he doesn't, it settles against him, tugs him just barely closer, and George feels *safe*.

The movie's sounds become distant. George dozes, teetering back and forth on the thinning line between consciousness and sleep. Dream's heartbeat thuds softly in his ears, rhythmic and soothing, and he feels warm, comfy; like he's made to be a pillow. He's a nice one, too. George thinks drowsily that he wouldn't mind cuddling with Dream very much.

It only registers in his mind that the movie has ended when the body under him shifts slightly, then there's a quiet murmuring of voices over his head, saying words that George can't be bothered to decipher. His mind has been overcome with a blanket of fuzz, every noise muffled and sounding as if he has been plunged underwater.

The front door opens and clicks shut as Sapnap, presumably, takes his leave, and then a gentle hand is smoothing into his hair and brushing crumbs of popcorn off his clothes before Dream moves again, hoisting him into his arms like he's featherlight. George has half the mind to move — he's not asleep just yet, after all — but it's like there's a thick tar encasing his body and weighing down his tongue, so thick that he can't be bothered to move, or open his eyes, or even speak.

So he leans his head on the chest offered to him, allows himself to be bundled into Dream's arms and carried down the dark hallway. Quiet footsteps ricochet off the walls, and a few short moments later he feels the familiar softness of blankets under him as he's settled carefully onto his bed.

Dream's voice, gentle and fond and sweet, slips into his ears like silk, words a melody coated in liquid gold that warms him from the inside out, threatens to burn but doesn't.

"Goodnight, George," He whispers, then a kiss is pressed to his forehead, the spot where it's placed tingling as if it would leave a permanent mark, and the blankets are pulled over him. Dream leaves, shutting the door quietly behind him.

And George finally, *finally* allows himself to slip into unconsciousness.

He dreams of stardust freckles and honeyed lips.

iii.

George hums to himself, listening to the muffled chatter of voices coming through the door across the hall from him. Leaning against the wall and scrolling on his phone idly, he glances once more at the time on his screen. The hallways are quiet, few students shuffling by and quiet chatter bouncing off the walls as they go. Some catch sight of him, giving him odd looks — it's not too common for a random student to just be sat waiting outside of a classroom — while one or two recognize him, tossing him a nod or wave; to which he smiles back.

And George wouldn't consider himself *popular*, per se, but he isn't the most unknown person around either. He thinks that a large part of that can be attributed to his association with Dream, whose reach into the school stretches deep, from people like Wilbur and his little brother Tommy to others in different sections of the school like Karl and MrBeast's gang. It's not particularly surprising, either, as Dream is one of the top students, alongside a few others like Technoblade and Illumina. Good grades, good looks (according to others), and a good personality. He's popular amongst the student body. George would admit that much.

The door clicks open. George blinks, looking up as students begin to file out of the room, the professor's voice echoing out after them, wishing them a good day and reminding them of their assignments. He scans every face, spotting a few familiar ones in the process — Wilbur grins and waves ecstatically to him with a gleeful shout of 'Gogy!' that makes him roll his eyes, but smile and give a short wave in return. The shouted nickname seems to have drawn some attention to him, and a few heads turn as a result.

Dream emerges a split second later, chatting amiably with another student — a dark haired science major that goes by the name of Corpse, George believes — and Wilbur's exclamation causes him to falter, turn his head to peer over the spread of students. Green eyes lock onto brown and George straightens, offering a small wave. Surprise flits over Dream's features, but he turns to Corpse and mutters what George presumes is a goodbye, and then Dream is nudging his way through to him.

"Hey," George says, slipping his phone into his back pocket. Dream peers down at him curiously.

"Hi," he greets, glancing around the hallway as if something is wrong, "what are you doing?"

George rolls his eyes. "Waiting for you," he answers, "obviously."

“Well I know *that*, ” Dream scoffs lightheartedly, “but why? Your class ended like, an hour ago, didn’t it? I thought you’d be home already.”

Home. George blinks, the word making his pulse stutter a bit. Calling their shared apartment *home* is nothing new — they’ve been living together for the longest time, after all. But at the same time it still makes him pause, brain whirling as it tries to process the sentence, and then eventually a smile is pulling at his lips and quiet happiness is blooming pink on his cheeks.

“It did,” he agrees, observing how Dream’s eyebrows furrow and he cocks his head in confusion, “but I thought we could... I dunno, go out for dinner, or something. I’m kinda tired of eating our own shitty cooking or ordering takeout.”

Dream rolls his eyes, crossing his arms. “My cooking isn’t *that* shitty,” he mutters indignantly. George laughs.

“Sure,” he says patronizingly. Dream pouts at him, but his lips are tilting into a smile. “I’ll pay, if you want.”

“Nah,” Dream shakes his head, and moves away. George takes the signal and follows, falling into step beside his roommate as they begin to walk towards the exit. “Let’s split,” he says, like he always does.

He shrugs. “Alright.” And then pauses, adding on, “How was class?”

Dream, inevitably, begins to ramble, telling George about his day, and George listens along. The building is quiet as they stroll, arms brushing together, making their way through the winding hallways and towards the exit. He hums, laughing when Dream cracks a joke and offering a few snarky remarks in between.

Their arms brush again, and George wonders distantly what it would feel like to hold Dream’s hand. He thinks that they would be warm, maybe. Dream’s hands are bigger than his — unsurprising, considering their height difference, and they look *rough*. Calloused. George’s own hands aren’t very big, they’re more slender. Pale, compared to Dream’s. He thinks that holding Dream’s hand would be nice.

His cheeks flush. The thought is pushed away immediately.

“How was your day?” Dream asks, pushing the doors to their building open. Bright sunlight shines into their eyes, and George has to blink a few times to help his eyes adjust to the shift in lighting.

“Fine,” he replies, breathing in fresh air. It’s much more lively outside of the school buildings, where the campus is open and people are meandering down the sidewalks. “Not very different from any other day.”

Dream hums. “Chess club?”

His lips curl into a smile, pride filling his chest. “I beat Fundy. And Tubbo.”

“Nice,” Dream whistles, seemingly impressed, and George has to duck away from the warm hand that moves to ruffle his hair. It’s become a thing for them — these little head ruffles — and though George doesn’t mind them all that much, he likes to pretend like it does. Dream laughs, but drops his arm and allows George to avoid his attacks, at least for the moment.

“You’re an idiot,” George huffs, straightening and adjusting his backpack. Dream laughs again. “I hate you.”

“Sure,” he grins cheekily. George scowls at him, but there’s no venom to it. “You love me.”

“I don’t.”

“You *do*.”

“I *don’t*.”

Dream sighs dramatically, moving forward to throw his arms over George’s shoulders and lean onto his back. He winces under the weight, stumbling and struggling to stay upright as Dream flops all over him, chin coming to rest on his head and arms loosely looping around George’s neck.

Dream nuzzles into his hair. “Just say you love me,” he whines childishly. “Please, Gogy.”

“Don’t ever call me that again,” George huffs, cheeks reddening, “And get *off*, you’re heavy.”

“You’re weak,” Dream counters, “and you hurt my feelings.”

He rolls his eyes. “Boohoo. Cry about it.”

“Give me a kiss,” Dream says, “and I’ll forgive you.”

George scoffs, successfully shoving Dream off of him and rolling his eyes again once he straightens, ignoring the puppy eyes that Dream shoots at him. “I’m not going to *kiss* you, Dream,” he says, just the very words grouped together feeling awkward on his tongue. Dream grins at him, already beginning to reach out, lips puckering in a way that has George wrinkling his nose and turning away.

“C’mon, Georgie, just one!”

“Dream!” George cries, struggling as warm hands latch onto his shoulders, tugging him closer. “Oh my *god*, stop. *Dream*. I’m not going to-”

Something wet lands on his cheek. George visibly cringes, stumbling back and nearly tripping over his own feet in his rush to do so. Dream’s wheeze rings out in the air, fucking *laughing* at his pain as he loosens his grip on George’s shoulders loosen and allows him to pull away. George makes a face, wiping at his cheek and wincing when his palm comes away wet. *Gross*.

“You are disgusting,” he says flatly, pulling the sleeve of his sweater up to rub at the spot where Dream had kissed him. Heat flushes his cheeks, embarrassment and disgust and something else mixing in his gut. Dream only laughs harder, arms wrapped around his stomach as he struggles for breath. George wonders how hard it would be to hide a body. “I’m moving out.”

Dream coughs, patting his chest a few times before he straightens, tosses him a cheeky smile. “You can’t do that.”

He chuffs, retorting with a scowl etched onto his features, “Watch me.”

Dream only chuckles, grinning wider and nudging him in the direction of the parking lot. George rolls his eyes and huffs, but allows himself to be guided as they fall back into step beside each other. The heat on his cheeks still persists, despite the silence that has filled the air between them, despite how Dream seems to have been completely unfazed by the playful teasing.

Well, that's what it is. Playful teasing. Nothing more.

George sighs to himself, ignoring the glance Dream tosses at him, and digs his teeth further into his bottom lip. The realization makes his chest give a painful squeeze.

He doesn't know why.

iv.

In all his time spent being his roommate, George has picked up on quite a few things about Dream's personality.

For one, Dream is not a morning person.

He's not, and never has been for as long as George has known him. Dream isn't a particularly *moody* person as a whole; sure he's emotional sometimes, and maybe he's a little impulsive when it's better not to be, but overall he's not really *moody*, except for in the mornings. So it's become sort of a routine, for Dream to always be a bit more sensitive in the early hours of the day, or a bit more thoughtless — especially just after he wakes up.

It is an amusing contrast to George, seeing as he wakes up while most are still asleep, and enjoys the quiet calmness that mornings bring. Dream is a night person, and George is the complete opposite. It's just another one of their contrasting features.

For another, Dream is *clingy*.

That's not said in a particularly bad way — George thinks it's cute, really, even if he pretends like it annoys him. Dream is very physically affectionate, whether it be hugs, or a hand curled around a wrist, or the fond hair ruffles he likes to give out so often.

And not only is he clingy, but he is easily jealous. Possessive, one would say, but not really in a negative light. George still remembers a time when Dream had been miffed about his budding friendship with Quackity, and even though he had tried really hard not to show it, George had been able to see the mild irritation on his face and in his words whenever the younger student came up, whether it had been in passing conversation or physically, in the sense of Quackity screaming George's name from across the campus.

It had been a slight problem until George had brushed off plans with his new friend in order to spend time with Dream, and in turn it seems as if Dream had realized that *no*, George is not going to replace him with the loud, obnoxious Business major, and *yes*, Dream is, in a sense, the first priority in George's mind. And from then on Dream developed a habit of tagging along to their little hangout sessions, whether it be just lingering at his side whenever they chat at the counter of the campus coffee shop that Karl happens to work at on weekdays, or somehow finding a way to slip onto the couch whenever Quackity pops over to force George to watch one of the very bad, very cringy drama shows that he enjoys so much. Quackity never says a word on it, but he and Dream developed a sort of mutual understanding — even becoming friends with a habit of playfully arguing — and George pretends not to notice the knowing and thoughtful glint that would appear in his friend's eyes whenever Dream happens to wander his way into their hangouts.

So, with that being said, it makes sense that a sleepy, just woken up Dream, would be just a little clingy in the mornings.

George had gotten accustomed to it. It's a routine they have. George will be up in the mornings, whether it be scrolling through his phone or doing some school work, and Dream will shuffle out with his eyes half closed and his hair messy like he'd just been raked through hell and back, flop onto the couch, and just *exist*.

More often than not, George will find himself running an absentminded hand through Dream's hair, or Dream's head will somehow make its way onto his lap, and they simply... sit.

It's nice.

And eventually, if Dream has not fallen back asleep — which actually happens more often than one would think — he'll drag himself off the couch and shuffle drowsily into the kitchen to grab something to eat. Neither of them really acknowledge the implications of their morning routine,

and neither of them really acknowledge the fact that it's for this reason Dream hates it when George isn't home when he wakes up, or that George has adjusted his schedules and plans so that he is home in the mornings as often as possible.

This morning is no different from any other.

The sound of a door clicking open is what makes George shift on the couch, pause typing on his phone for a few moments in order to turn his head and peer into the hallway. Dream is wandering out, rubbing at his eyes and clad in nothing but gray sweatpants and a simple white shirt.

"Good morning," George greets, resisting the urge to smile once Dream holds true and sinks into the cushions with a small sigh. It only takes a second for him to flop over on his side, nudge his way onto George's thighs so that he has to lift his arms so Dream's head can settle comfortably in his lap.

"Morning," Dream mumbles, his breaths warm on his stomach.

George's fingers find their way into silky blond hair, and he resumes his typing — this time with one less hand. "Sleep well?"

"Fine," he says, tilting his head into George's gentle touch. He hums, presses his fingers gently into his scalp and scratches very, very gently. Dream sighs, exhaling satisfaction in the form of a breath, and George thinks he's almost like a dog; a puppy. It's endearing, he finds himself thinking, continuing his gentle ministrations as he scrolls through his phone.

He feels happy, oddly content to sit like this with Dream settled in his lap and card his fingers through his soft hair.

Mornings like this are... nice. Better than nice. He'd even describe them as lovely.

A few minutes pass of this, the air between them quiet; comfortable. Dream's chest rises and falls steadily, breaths soft, and George smiles gently.

"Alright," He says after a moment, nudging Dream a little in his attempt to get him to move. Dream makes a noise of complaint, pressing his face further into George's stomach. He pokes at a freckle dusted cheek, rolling his eyes in exasperation. "Go get something to eat, idiot. You have class in an

hour.”

Dream groans again, but listens to George’s gentle insistence and sits up. He rubs at his eyes, blinking slowly. George fights the warm fondness that flutters in his chest at the sight.

“Okay,” he mumbles, “good morning.”

And then he leans forward, presses a kiss to George’s temple, slides off the couch, and shuffles away into the kitchen like nothing had happened. Like it’s *normal*.

George blinks. Once, then twice, staring into nothingness as his brain blanks and struggles to comprehend Dream’s actions. His phone hangs loose in his fingers.

And once he finally, finally grasps exactly what had happened — heat blooms on his cheeks. Red and hot, and George tugs his legs closer to himself, rubbing at his face like he could wipe the blush off his cheeks. His mind whirls, fingers wandering to the spot that Dream’s lips had touched, feeling the area tingle like it’d just been burned.

He wonders if such a simple thing is supposed to make him feel this way, and finds himself thinking back to that night he’d spent doing his essay. Dream had kissed him that time, too, and George had even admitted to himself that he liked it at the moment. He thinks back to the day he had waited outside Dream’s classroom, and realizes that he had wanted to hold Dream’s hand, back then.

Thinking back on a lot of things as he sits on their couch with red cheeks, George comes to two realizations.

For one; the relationship between him and Dream has been teetering on the edge of friendship and something *more* for a long, long time. They do a lot of things that normal friends don’t, not even roommates. Things like *this* — their morning ‘routine’ is a good example of that. Other things, like their casual touches that George wouldn’t allow anyone else to do, like Dream’s clinginess towards him, like the way they bend for each other and only each other whether that be in the form of changing their class schedules so their days better fit together or passing on chances to hang out with other friends so that they can spend time with each other instead.

It’s been like this for a long, long time, and George has no idea how he’s never noticed until now.

The second thing he realizes comes tied along with the first. And it's this:

George is painfully, hopelessly in love.

v.

He realizes a third thing, weeks later when he's sitting at Dream's bed taking his temperature and pressing a cool palm against unnaturally warm skin.

Being in love is a lot like burning.

It starts small.

At first, it's sparks. Embers. Warm under your feet, so, so small that you don't even feel it, biting into your skin and leaving marks — leaving tiny burns that you never notice until there's a *lot*.

"George," Dream mumbles, words slurring together as his eyes shut for a short moment only to open again, like he's trying to keep them open but failing. His voice is raspy, phlegm thick in his throat. He coughs.

George winces, drawing his palm away from Dream's face to smooth it through his hair instead. He hushes him, voice soft as he takes in Dream's appearance. Flushed cheeks, tired eyes, grogginess etched into his expression like it's permanent. Sympathy floods his chest as he stares upon the sight, his roommate all sick and tired and barely able to talk with the thickness in his throat.

"Stay awake for a little longer," he says gently, "I'm gonna get you medicine, alright?"

Dream's only response is a drowsy hum, one sounding as if it's being forcefully dragged from his throat. George's eyebrows furrow, but he says nothing, only gets to his feet and draws his hand back to his side — a part of him aches with guilt when Dream whines in protest.

Sparks turn into fire. Gentle flames of attraction, licking at your toes, small enough so that you barely feel it. Only a little warmth to even signify it's there, easily brushed off.

Outside in the hallway, it's quiet. George makes his way towards the kitchen and grabs a glass, filling it with water and placing it on the counter before he begins to shuffle through their cabinets. They should have medicine somewhere. It's not often that one of them gets sick, but it's always good to be prepared.

A short moment later he finds it, bringing the bottle close to his face so he can read the instructions before following them and shaking out two pills. He keeps them cupped carefully in his palm. The glass of water is picked up again, and George shuffles back across their apartment, nudges Dream's door open with his foot.

Dream hasn't moved an inch. His chest is rising and falling steadily, eyes shut, but when George enters the room they blink open quietly and hazy green eyes turn to peer at him.

He sets the glass down on the bedside table, prods Dream to sit up at least for the time being, and then dumps the pills into his palm, hands the cup to him, and orders softly: "Drink."

And then, the longer you leave it, the longer the fire burns, the bigger it grows. Until it's no longer a small flame; it's more. Fondness. Affection. Endearment. It's bigger and it burns maybe a little bit, but it's still calm enough to be described as *warm*. You think it'd go away eventually, that it's just a temporary thing that'll fizzle out as time goes on, even as it persists and flares up around your legs and tickles your thighs with it's heat.

Dream takes the cup in his hands, obediently swallowing the medicine and downing it with the cool liquid. George smiles. He takes the cup away, places it back on the table and watches as

Dream sinks back into the mattress with a sigh.

“I have class in an hour,” He says. “Will you be okay without me?”

Dream cracks his eyes open to peer at him. George’s stomach flutters and pulls, so he reaches down and buries his fingers in the dull blond strands on his head like he’s done so many times before. Dream makes a noise of content, tilting into it, eyes slipping closed.

George smiles softly, his hand drifting down so it can settle on Dream’s warm cheek.

But it doesn’t go away.

No, it grows into something even more than that. Longing; searing heat flickering around your hips and climbing up your body, eating you up, engulfing you. It’s a proper fire now, one that can’t go unnoticed no matter how much you try. You attempt to get rid of it, wave your hands around a bit and pat at the places where it catches only for it to come back stronger. It persists. Yearning and wistfulness and affection blooming so strongly that it sears and hurts and leaves *scars*.

There’s nothing you can do now, except watch the flame as it crawls up your body, growing bigger as it’s fueled, burning its way up your neck and tickling your cheeks. You gasp for breath, smoke filling your lungs, embers floating in the air like orange snowflakes — and some fight it. They struggle against the flame, try to put it out, but it’s already too late and it’s far too strong now. It’s too much burning too quickly that there’s nothing you can do about it.

“Don’t leave,” Dream whispers, appearing almost like a child with the way he leans into George’s touch. His hand moves up to cover his, and keeping George’s cool hand pressing against his cheek, and he turns his face into it.

Soft lips brush against pale skin. George exhales, fighting the affectionate smile that threatens to stretch across his face.

“Okay,” he concedes gently, running his thumb over the freckles scattered across Dream’s face. “I’ll stay.”

Dream's response is a soft, tired hum, and then his eyes are slipping shut again. George allows himself a soft smile, listening to his quiet breaths. His chest feels fuzzy, warm, adoration threatening to strangle him as he stares upon the sight.

After a moment, he draws his hand away, pulling it back to his side. Dream mumbles groggily, reaches out, and then their hands are pressing warm together as their fingers interlace. George inhales sharply, but allows it to happen, watches as Dream teeters dangerously between his dreams and consciousness, and then his eyes fall shut for a final time and he's asleep.

He doesn't move from his spot, even as his phone buzzes with texts from Sapnap and inquiries from Karl about why he hasn't come to class. Instead he sits with Dream, and listens to his gentle, steady breaths, all while drowning in the warm affection that's filling his lungs.

So the fire grows, slowly; steadily, and George does nothing but burn.

(bonus)

"What are you doing up here?"

George blinks, twisting around to peer behind him. The door to the rooftop shuts with a loud click, lime green cloth stark against the gray of the building. Dream takes a few steps forward, approaching slowly as if he's unsure whether he should, but when George makes no attempt to stop him, Dream seats himself on the roof next to him. Their legs dangle over the edge, over the concrete that seems as if it's miles away even when it's really only a few flights of stairs down.

"Watching the sunset," George replies, turning to face forward again. The sun bleeds streaks of red and pink and orange into the blue of the sky as it lowers, just barely peeking over the rooftops as it prepares to disappear under the horizon. Dream laughs quietly.

“You can’t even see most of the colors,” he points out. Their thighs brush together slightly.

George shrugs, stifling the flush threatening to rise on his cheeks. “I know,” he says, “but it’s still nice to watch, I guess.”

Dream hums. “I guess,” and George smiles because he knows that Dream still doesn’t fully understand, but leaves the topic alone.

Silence fills the air between them. His thoughts wander, his legs swing absentmindedly, and the sun dips lower in the sky.

Things for the past few weeks have been sort of... different, between them.

He knows it’s mostly his fault. It’s hard to act the same around Dream when all he thinks about when they’re together is how nice it would be to kiss him, how comfortable it would be to hold his hand, or hug him and run fingers through his hair, or even trace the freckles on his cheeks. It’s hard, because flirtatiousness is a part of Dream’s personality, and more often than not George finds himself with red cheeks and a lightheartedly annoyed scowl etched onto his face.

It’s not different in the sense that they can’t be around each other; George would never allow that to happen and Dream wouldn’t either. Things are just... a bit more awkward, especially when it comes to the things they used to do that were a little more than just *friendly*. Like Dream’s casual touches, for one. George always finds himself tensing under them now rather than softening, even if it’s expected. And he knows that it doesn’t slip by Dream, he can see when his eyebrows furrow and he draws back slightly as if suddenly apprehensive, the cheerful expression on his face dropping.

Their casual touches aren’t so casual anymore, and George finds himself missing them.

Dream is the one who breaks the silence. Voice soft, almost meek; as if he’s shy. Scared. “Did I do something wrong?”

George blinks, opens his mouth to respond.

“Why would you think that?” He asks, even though he knows the answer. Dream exhales softly, shifting in his spot as his thigh bumps against George’s again.

“You’ve been weird,” Dream says, and even though George knows it’s true, hearing it actually be said aloud is enough to make him wince. “Around me. Like I make you uncomfortable, or something.” He pauses, sounding small. “I don’t know what I did, but I’m sorry.”

George brings a hand up to rub at his face, inhaling unsteadily. He lets his eyes drift over the rooftops, then down to watch as cars pass by in blurs of color.

“You didn’t do anything,” he mumbles, throat feeling tight. A sigh leaves his lips. Guilt churns in his stomach. He adds on a short moment later, “I’ve just… been thinking a lot. It’s not you, Dream.”

“Are you sure?” Dream asks, like he doesn’t quite believe him. When George nods, he frowns. “Thinking about what?”

“Stuff.” George mutters mildly. He stills, fingers halting from where they had been tapping absentmindedly on the hard material of the roof’s edge. In the corner of his eye, he can see Dream tilt his head.

“What stuff?” He prompts.

George doesn’t reply. He breathes another sigh, mind jumping from thought to thought as he wonders what to do in this situation.

Beside him, Dream shifts.

A gentle hand grips his shoulder. George tenses, turning his head to peer at Dream. Green eyes reflect the sunlight when they lock eyes, and his voice is soft, eyebrows furrowed.

Concern. George swallows, the lump in his throat holding firm. “What?”

“You can trust me,” Dream says quietly, “You know that, right?” And he feels awestruck with the way the sun casts light onto Dream’s face, making his eyes seem impossibly brighter and his hair look like it’s *glowing*. It’s stunning and breathtaking and *ethereal*, and before George can stop himself he is reaching up to cup Dream’s cheek, dragging his thumb across star-like freckles.

His breath hitches.

God, Dream is beautiful.

“I know,” George murmurs, voice scratchy. Dream peers down at him, unbothered by his touch, and if he squints he thinks that he can see a hint of a darker coloring dusted across Dream’s cheeks. “I’m sorry.”

“Is everything alright?” Dream prompts, gentle in a way that’s making George *melt*. “What were you thinking about?”

“You,” he answers, breathless, cheeks flushing and his pulse stuttering once the word tumbles from his lips. Dream falters, surprise gripping his features, eyes widening and his eyebrows lifting. George feels instant regret and moves, about to draw his hand away when Dream reaches up to keep it pressed to his cheek.

His voice sounds small, thick with disbelief. “Me?”

“Uh, yeah,” George says, suddenly nervous, shifting a little. Their gazes stay locked together, unable to look away, even as the wind ruffles through their hair and cars buzz past. Dream looks at him quizzically, and something in George swells, decides to just *go for it*.

He leans forward, slowly, allowing Dream all the time to pull away. But when Dream doesn’t, his breaths warm on George’s lips, he lets himself press closer, closer, enough so that their lips are just centimeters away.

“This -” George swallows, stomach fluttering, “This is okay, right?”

“It is,” Dream confirms, lips just barely brushing against his. Dream grins cheekily. “You’re gonna kiss me, aren’t you?”

He exhales shakily. “Do you want me to?”

He receives a hum. Dream smiles at him again, gentler this time, more fond.

“I do,” he murmurs, and that’s all the prompting George needs.

It’s soft. It’s sweet. It’s nicer than anything else he’s ever felt before, tingling hot warmth spreading through his chest and stomach and all the way down to the tips of his fingers as they press together. Dream hums, mouth moving gently against his like it’s natural, like it’s *right*. And George melts into it, pressing closer, closer, closer; until they’re both breathless and he’s pulling away to take in gulps of air. Lungs burning, pulse racing, he stares at Dream. Dream stares back, cheeks flushed beautifully pink and his eyes bright.

Dream tilts his head further into George’s palm, grinning happily. “You could’ve done that earlier, instead of being weird.” George rolls his eyes.

“You’re an idiot,” he mutters. Dream laughs breathily.

“You love me.” And George rolls his eyes again, but smiles, feeling all soft and nice and warm inside. He feels happy; feels *content*, sitting on the edge of this roof with cars rushing down below and Dream’s skin like silk under his touch.

“I do,” George agrees, and thinks that burning isn’t such a bad feeling after all.

End Notes

Comments and Kudos are much appreciated! Let me know your thoughts! <3

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